CHAPTER LXI: SUSPICION

ALL SOLDIERS, GET IN THERE!

GO!

ROUT WHOEVER YOU CAN!

WE CAN SHOW NO LENIENCE TO TRAITORS!

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DO NOT LET A SINGLE ANT ESCAPE!

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AIM FOR THEIR COMMANDER!

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BOW AND ARROWS ARE AS GOOD AS WORTHLESS, THEY CAN'T PENETRATE IT.

I HAD IRON CHAINS SPECIALLY SEWN INTO THE CLOAK FOR PROTECTION.

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WE'RE COMING OVER THERE.

YOU MIGHT WANT TO HURRY UP.

BIND AND BREAK THE LIMBS OF ANY WHO TRY TO RESIST.

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COME ON OUT, RAT!

YOUR GAME OF HIDE AND SEEK IS AT AN END!

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HMPH.

AAAAAH, AAAAH!

HAH...

ARGH...

GIH-YAAH...

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GUH.

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FOR SOMEONE ATTEMPTING SUCH A GRAND PLOT, YOU'RE CERTAINLY LACKING IN COURAGE.

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GUBUGH!

ズズズ...

I WON'T LET YOU HAVE SUCH A SIMPLE DEATH!

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IF YOU WISH TO TAKE THE EMPEROR'S LIFE...

YOU HAD BEST BE READY TO CROSS PATHS WITH ME!

DEMITORIUS CERTAINLY IS QUICK AT HIS JOB.

IT ONLY TOOK TWO DAYS FOR THE ARRESTS...

I'VE NEVER EVEN HEARD HIS NAME.

YET INSPITE OF NOT KNOWING HIM, HE WAS STILL, OUT OF THE BLUE, AFTER MY LIFE.

WHAT'S SO FUNNY?

YOU DON'T EVEN RECOGNISE ONE OF YOUR MENIALS...

YOU WERE RAISED LIKE THAT WEREN'T YOU.

HEH... YEAH, I GUESS THAT'D BE RIGHT.

YOUR MAJESTY.

THAT'S RIGHT... DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA AS TO HOW MANY FOES THAT WOMAN HAS HAD REMOVED BEHIND THE SCENES, ALL TO ENSURE THE HOWLS OF HER OWN AMBITION?

WHAT ON EARTH ARE YOU TRYING TO SAY ABOUT ME?!

ANSWER ME CLEARLY!

IT'S NOT YOU...

BUT YOUR MOTHER...

MOTHER...?!

DO YOU KNOW HOW MANY INNOCENT LIVES SHE'S DRIVEN TO DEATH?!

NO, NOT EVEN ENEMIES...

MERELY THOSE SHE BELIEVED COULD ONE DAY BECOME AS SUCH...

YOU HAVE NO CLUE HOW MY RELATIVES WERE EXECUTED, FOR CRIMES THEY HAD PINNED UPON THEM!

OF COURSE YOU WOULDN'T KNOW MY NAME!

SURELY YOU WERE BEING UNREASONABLE TO TRY AND HARM EVEN THE LADY OCTAVIA?

SO IT WAS REVENGE FOR THOSE OF YOUR FAMILY ENTOMBED IN THE DARK...

IF SO THEN...

...!

HOW COULD IT BE REVENGE IF YOU DON'T DESTROY THE GREATEST FRUITS OF THAT AMBITION?

FUHEHE... YOU FOOL!

Y...

YET I INHERITED THE THRONE IN A JUST AND FAIR MANNER...!

A POWER STRUGGLE IS QUITE COMMON FOR A ROYAL FAMILY!

FINE, TRAMPLING OTHER NOTED FAMILIES UNDER FOOT!

IT'S NATURAL YOU'D HOLD YOUR HEAD UP HIGH.

LET ME REPHRASE THAT YOUR MAJESTY...

YOU YOURSELF WERE...

WHAT WAS THAT?!

WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO SAY, CUR?!

YET YOUR MAJESTY...

THE TRUTH IS, THAT PRIDE OF YOURS, AND YOUR PROUD LINEAGE...

IS JUST THE GRAND TALE OF A KNAVE...

SO YOUR PLOT FOR REVENGE WAS ALL THE MORE BASE...

HOW VILE...

WHAT A DISGUSTING, EVIL BOND!

I IMAGINE YOU KNOW A LITTLE OF THE SECOND GENERATION EMPEROR, CALIGULA, NO?

WHAT DO IT?!

HE SUFFERED FROM A DIRE ILLNESS, AND BROUGHT SHAME TO THE FAMILY!

MOTHER'S BROTHER!

IT WAS NOT DUE TO ILLNESS.

HE WAS A MADMAN FROM THE START.

CALIG-ULA WAS...

HE WAS THE SORT TO...

SHARE THE SAME BED AS HIS SISTER.

THERE'S NO WAY A LARGE FAMILY OF NOBLES COULD FULLY HIDE SUCH A SCANDAL.

IT'S A WELL KNOWN TALE, ALBEIT RATHER HIDDEN, THAT YOUR MOTHER WOULD HAVE SUCH TRYSTS WITH HER BROTHER PRIOR TO MARRIAGE.

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WH...

WHAT ARE YOU SAYING...?

GETS YOU THINKING A BIT DEEPER DOESN'T IT...

SO, YOUR MAJESTY...

FATHER COULD ACTUALLY BE...

AS TO WHO YOUR REAL...

CONSIDERING HE PASSED AWAY WHILE YOU WERE STILL YOUNG IT'S NO SURPRISE YOU DON'T KNOW.

TRUTH WAS, HE WAS FROM A SHODDY FAMILY, AND WAS NOTORIOUS FOR IDLY GAMBLING AWAY HIS TIME.

HE WAS A NOBLE IN NAME ONLY.

MY FATHER WAS GNAEUS DOMITIUS AHENOBARBUS...

IN ROME HE WAS A FOREMOST...

UUH...

IT'S A LIE...!

...!

IT'S SOMETHING ALL YOU FAMOUS NOBLES INDULGE IN!

SHALL I TELL YOU HOW HE WAS ALSO THE TYPE TO LIAISE WITH HIS OWN SISTER!

SILENCE!

YOUR MAJE-STY!

CUR, STOP WITH THESE LIES!

IF YOU'VE THE COURAGE!

IF YOU THINK SO, WHY NOT ASK YOUR MOTHER DIRECTLY?!

THOSE ARE UNSUBSTANTIATED RUMOURS, COMPLETE AND UTTER LIES!

THIS IS NONSENSE...!

PLEASE, YOUR MAJESTY, CALM DOWN!

IT WAS JUST NONSENSE FROM A TRAITOR...

TRY AND TRICK ME WOULD YOU?!

YES YES...

PU...

HAHAHA...

MAD EMPEROR CALIG-ULA...?

AS IF I COULD BE THE SON OF THE...

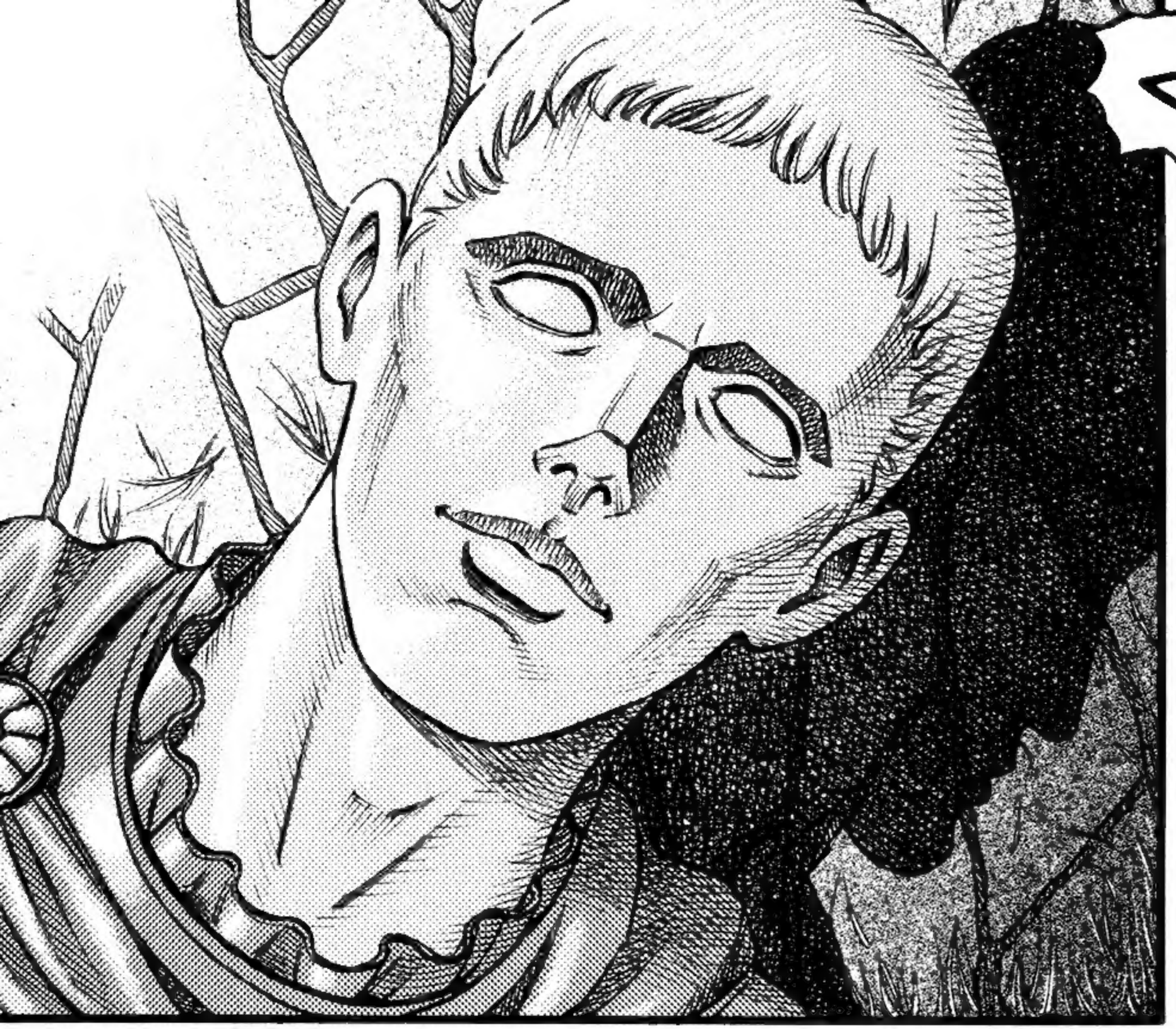
!

AT LEAST GIVE A MORE REASONABLE LIE!

DON'T MAKE ME LAUGH!

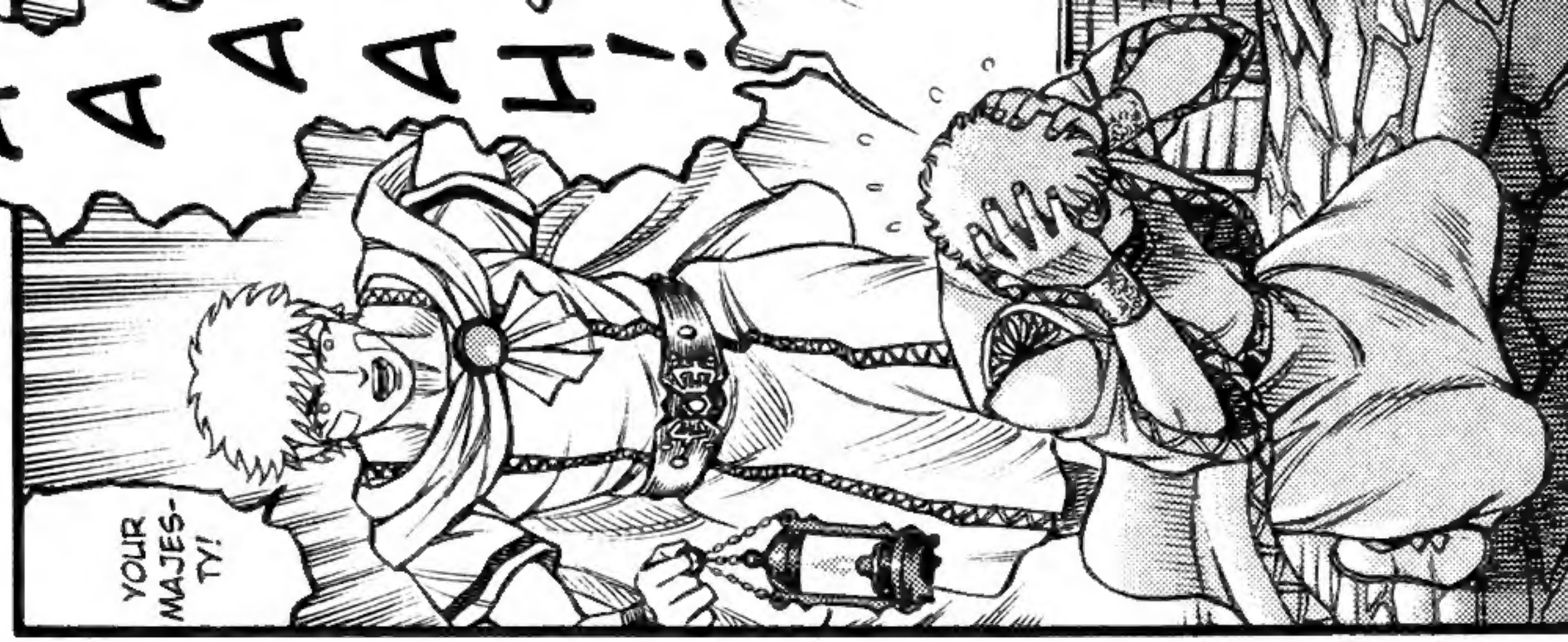
CA...

CALL...



TAKE SLOW BREATHS.

WE SHOULD GET BACK NOW.
I'LL KILL THEM...


AAAAAAAAH!!
YOUR MAJES-TY!

I MUST REMOVE THEM FROM THIS WORLD, TO PREVENT ANY FUTURE TROUBLE!

R...

RIGHT, RUSKA?!

THEY WERE SIMPLY TRAITORS RIGHT!

IT'S NOT SOME SERIOUS AFFAIR WHICH COULD AFFECT THE NAME NERO IS IT?!

TH... THEIR WHOLE CLAN... I WON'T EVEN LEAVE THEIR SLAVES, I'LL CATCH THEM ALL...

AND E... EXECUTE THEM.

ARE YOU ALRIGHT YOUR MAJESTY?

YES...

VILE LIARS SUCH AS THIS ONE...

MUST BE SEALED UP FOREVER!

...!

YOU'RE MY ALLY RIGHT...

YOU WON'T REVEAL THE CARELESS UTTERANCES WHICH HE JUST MADE WILL YOU?

SWEAR TO ME, RUSKA!

PROMISE ME...

THAT FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE, YOU WILL NEVER REVEAL THESE MATTERS!